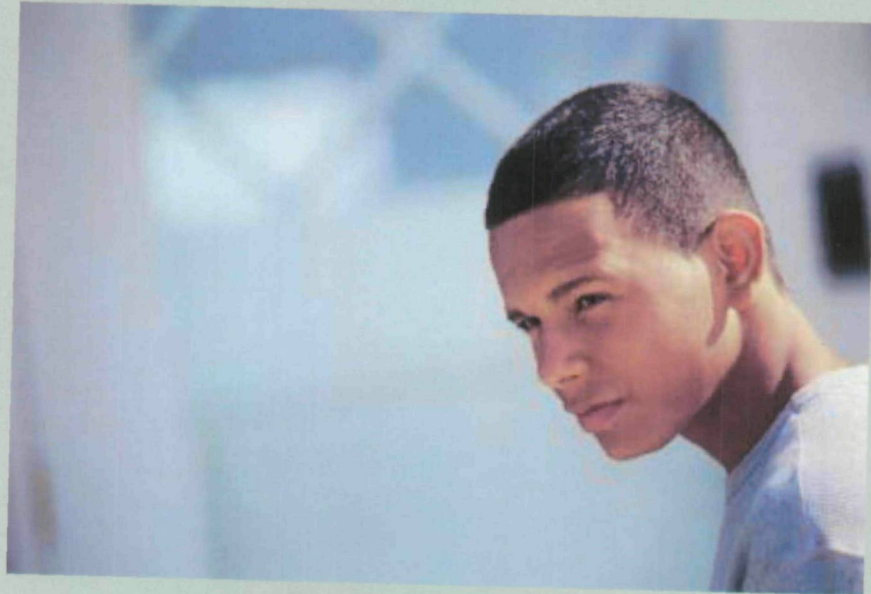


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Alternative Living Arrangements

Recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly

October 1, 2004

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Executive Summary

The Task Force to Study Alternative Living Arrangements for Children in Out-of-home Placement was tasked to:

- (1) Study and make recommendations regarding the issue of placing children in out-of-home placement appropriately and expeditiously in alternative living arrangements;
- (2) Study and make recommendations regarding the feasibility of alternative living arrangements for children that require the cooperative efforts of the Department of Natural Resources and involve placing children in group homes and providing them with activities related to the Chesapeake Bay and other adventure-based activities;
- (3) Study and make recommendations regarding the feasibility of coordinating with the State Department of Education in developing special instructional curricula geared toward the needs of children in alternative living arrangements, and;
- (4) Study and make recommendations regarding children in alternative living arrangements and the need for appropriate medical and mental health services and alcohol and drug abuse services.

The Task Force has identified the scope of its work as exploring strategies for developing nature or adventure-based programs for youth who have been committed by the court for out-of-home placement. Issues that need to be addressed include: resources; age range of youth to be served; the type of programming; the level of security; and prospective locations for effective programming. Establishing an effective program requires collaboration among all child-serving agencies (i.e., DHMH, MSDE, DHR, & DJS), the community, child advocates, and law enforcement agents. Valid assessment tools must be used to accurately determine a youth's risk level and appropriateness for placement. Additionally, effective aftercare programming must be incorporated to enhance community re-entry services.

Task Force efforts involved reviewing documents relating to current program trends and best practices and inviting guests to provide expertise on relevant subject matter. The following represents the committee's assessment of the current state of juvenile justice, as it relates to out-of-home placement, in the state of Maryland:

- The Maryland Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) currently has several *Standard Advanced Payment Contracts* and numerous *Per Diem Contracts* for out-of-home placements.
- Levels of care include, but are not limited to: independent living; shelter care; treatment foster care; group homes; residential treatment programs; adventure-based programs; and secure confinement programs.
- DJS is currently undergoing major systemic change to downsize its larger institutional programs and to develop smaller regionalized programs.
- The Cheltenham Youth Facility has been downsized, and the Victor Cullen Academy has been unused since 2002.
- The Charles H. Hickey, Jr. School is currently undergoing major programmatic changes, which will result in a more refined program.
- A shift has also been made to enhance and increase community-based programming for adjudicated youth.
- There are a limited number of out-of-home programs available to provide services to the female population, so gender specific programming should be enhanced.
- Youth are placed in programs outside of their respective communities, often spanning from one region of the state to another.
- Families are not engaged in treatment planning while youth are in placement due to logistical limitations.
- Mental health services are insufficient and often non-existent in larger institutions.

- Youth are receiving inadequate educational services while in placement, resulting in inappropriate educational assignments upon reintegration to the community.
- DJS youth have problems and needs similar to DHR, DHMH, and MSDE youth.
- DJS Youth Centers have adventure-based programming that might serve as a model for the development of a new Departmental program.

Recommendation

It is the intent of the committee to establish a program model to serve as the foundation for an out-of-home, adventure-based treatment facility located in remote regions of eastern, western, southern, and central Maryland. Emphasis should be placed on providing immediate and effective intervention for moderate risk youth in a small facility. Risk will be assessed utilizing the "Classification and Placement Assessment for Adjudicated Youth" instrument developed by the University of Maryland, Bureau of Governmental Research. The education curricula should be comparable to MSDE, and all school personnel should be certified in accordance to established regulation. Regular and specialized educational services should be provided. Collaboration among state agencies should be promoted to support Governor Ehrlich's vision of a systematic "child first" culture. Program staff should then consist of, or be trained by, personnel representing Juvenile Services, MSDE, Human Resources, Natural Resources, and Mental Health & Hygiene. The goal is to ensure that a youth's needs are met, based on the following domain areas: mental health; substance abuse; somatic health; family functioning and education.

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Program Design

The program design will be based on existing programs that have demonstrated positive outcomes and/or promising practices. Several programs have been identified that can serve as a basis for said development. Some programs that stand out are those operated by the Missouri Division of Youth Services and Three Springs' Adolescent Treatment Programs.

The Missouri Division of Youth Services is unique because it demonstrates the effectiveness of establishing regionalized programs in remote locations, serving the highest-risk youth, in very small facilities. The stigmatization associated with large institutions, plagued with violence and inadequate treatment, has been virtually eliminated. Staffing patterns are appropriate, staff has been properly trained, case management and family counseling capabilities have been built, and an investment to monitor and support community-based services has been made. For example, Missouri operates nine "Moderately Structured Facilities," of which three are located in state parks. These programs use the same treatment approach as group homes, but are designed for youths who need more structure and supervision. Basic education, General Education Development (GED) and remedial and special education are provided on-site.

Three Springs operates fourteen campuses, (i.e., campuses in Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and Maryland) located in remote locations, providing treatment to both male and female youth. The outdoor therapeutic program utilizes a Cognitive Behavioral Group model. Their treatment team helps youth understand and practice proper roles and boundaries that exist both in a therapeutic and community environment. More importantly, the program helps parents develop a "Master Treatment Plan" for their children and offers guidance in evaluating and adjusting said plans on a monthly basis.

Both Three Springs and the Missouri Division of Youth Services promote adventure-based activities, specialized education services, family development, and the growth and development of youth outside their normal social environment.

The ideal program in Maryland should implement essential components of the Missouri Division of Youth Services and Three Springs' Adolescent Treatment Program. Of particular interest is the necessity of developing programming for both male and female youth. The youth population should range from ages twelve (12) to seventeen (17). Youth will be grouped according to their respective age groups. The program should range from a six (6) to nine (9) month period, or longer if deemed necessary to address identified needs. A youth should present moderate risk levels with no current violent offense adjudication (i.e., murder, rape, assault, kidnapping, car jacking). Validated risk instruments should guide decision-making. Assessing appropriate risk levels will assist with effectively managing the population served and the facility itself. The program will be non-secure and there will be no security gate or fence. Staff supervision, and the remote location of the sites themselves, will be the prominent security feature. The facility will have the flexibility to exclude youth from the program if deemed appropriate. The facility capacity should be no more than forty-eight (48) beds.

Technical assistance should be sought from Missouri and Three Springs, and visits to said sites should precede any program implementation.

Youth Criteria

A youth admitted to the program will be a "moderate risk" young male or female experiencing emotional, behavioral, or learning difficulty. He/she must be an adjudicated offender and committed for an out-of-home placement.

To assist in developing researched-based criteria for program admission, the University of Maryland Bureau of Governmental Research examined a DJS sample group (N = 1,320 youth) that was used in developing criteria for the "Classification and Placement Assessment for Adjudicated Youth." Case history information has been assessed to determine the profile of a "moderate risk" offender. Thirty six (36) youth in the pilot test sample have a "moderate" assessment score (score of 3-6) and fall into the "Special Programs" section (attachment 1).

The list below details some general conditions for youth selection into the program:

- Moderate risk
- No active drug and/or alcohol dependency at admission
- Demonstrate the ability to function in a structured environment (i.e., no more than two unsuccessful program terminations)
- Mentally, emotionally, and physically capable of participating in program activities
- Between the ages of twelve (12) and seventeen (17)
- No prior escape history
- Demonstrate a willingness to participate in the program
- Parent/guardian/custodian must agree to participate in program activities

Youth Classification

If a program meets the needs of the population it was designed to serve, then it will increase the likelihood of success. Youth with similar risk levels and needs should be served within the same program. This is accomplished by making placement decisions in accordance to strict protocols.

The "Classification and Placement Assessment for Adjudicated Youth," developed for DJS by the University of Maryland Bureau of Governmental Research (BGR), will be used to determine appropriate placements. This tool measures static and dynamic risk factors covering key domains such as current charge, delinquent history, school, peers, family, substance abuse, and mental health. The tool incorporates a guideline matrix that uses assessment results to aid decisions regarding levels of probation supervision, out-of-home placements, and specialized aftercare. If used properly, it will achieve the goals of consistency, fairness, and accountability in decisions that critically affect the placement of adjudicated Maryland youth.

It is essential to assure local communities that programs in their respective regions are serving youth for which they were designed.

Youth Aftercare

Community re-integration is a vital part of a youth's commitment for placement. The ultimate goal of any program is to have a structured aftercare component to support community re-integration. DJS currently has new policies and protocols in place to support aftercare program development. As required by current DJS policy, aftercare planning should begin immediately upon a youth's admission into a program. The facility treatment team should work in collaboration with DJS aftercare case managers to develop and implement Treatment Service Plans. This should include but not be limited to, making referrals to service linkages and aggressive follow-up to ensure that these services are provided.

The proposed program design should include a dedicated aftercare worker who follows the youth from admission to discharge. They will be responsible for developing and maintaining positive relationships with the youth's family during the placement phase and maintaining these relationships upon the youth's return to the community. An additional role of the aftercare worker will involve transporting family members to and from treatment/discharge meetings. Intensive contact and follow-up with the youth and family should be maintained for at least ninety (90) days following community reintegration.

Program Staffing

Employees for the proposed program should be qualified and experienced in working with at-risk and the delinquent youth population. Employees should also be extremely motivated and possess strong leadership and mentoring skills. Salaries should be competitive and comparable to like positions or programs.

The chart below represents a salary comparison between DJS Youth Centers, Three Springs – New Dominion, and the Missouri Division of Youth Services (residential direct care staff):

| Program Name | Position Name | Minimum Qualifications | Salary Range |
|--|--------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|
| DJS Youth Centers | (1) Case Management Specialist | BS or comparable exp | 29,501 – 42,205 |
| | (2) Resident Advisor | HS Diploma | 27,710 – 42,393 |
| Three Springs – New Dominion | (1) Youth Counselor | BS Degree | 23,700-28,700 |
| Missouri DYS – Residential Direct Care Staff | (1) Youth Specialist | BS or comparable exp | 29,532 – 35,076 |
| | (2) Youth Specialist Trainee | AA or comparable exp | 23,520 – 31,392 |

Based on the aforementioned comparisons, Maryland ranks highest in pay scale for direct care staff. Thus, the salary range for Maryland should be used as a baseline in allocating funds for personnel. However, a more thorough, in-depth position analysis should be conducted to accurately reflect future classifications and salary.

Projected Locations

At present, youth in Maryland are placed in programs that are not necessarily located in, or near, their respective communities. As a result, youth are placed in an unfamiliar environment and are deprived the opportunity to have their family involved in placement and treatment decisions. Additionally, youth released from placement are returned to their "old neighborhoods" where their surroundings are not conducive to a successful transition or aftercare follow-up. Regionalization is essential to ensure that youth are served in close proximity to their homes and are afforded the opportunity for linkages to services in a familiar environment. This will ultimately enhance re-integration, as families will be more inclined to participate in the treatment process. Youth and families will be linked to appropriate resources within their own communities for long-term care.

Currently, the Department of Natural Resources has identified several locations throughout the state for prospective programming (attachment 2). Western Maryland is already rich with available resources for programming as several DJS Youth Center camps are currently in operation there. Potential sites for future programming identified by DNR are: Monocacy Natural Resources Management Area (NRMA); Echo Lake – South Mountain Complex; Palmer State Park; Cedarville State Forest; Doncaster State Forest and Pocomoke River State Forest. The site locations identified are based on a twenty (20) acreage estimate with the capacity to serve approximately fifty (50) youth. In comparison, current DJS Youth Center sites range from eight (8) to twelve (12) acres.

The proposed site configurations support the Task Force efforts to offer a regionalized program model:

- Youth from the Baltimore Metropolitan area would benefit from the Palmer State Park location;
- Youth from Western Maryland would benefit from Monocacy (NRMA) and/or the Echo Lake location, in addition to the sites already in existence in Garrett and Allegany Counties;
- Youth from Southern Maryland would benefit from Cedarville or Doncaster State Forest site;
- Youth from the DC Metropolitan Area would benefit from Cedarville State Forest site; and
- Youth from Eastern Shore Maryland would benefit from the Pocomoke River State Forest site.

Community Involvement

In establishing regional programs, it is essential to gain community support. A campaign should ensue to bring community groups and child advocates together in a forum to discuss the necessity of establishing regionalized programming. Attempts should be made to gain support from elected officials within select regions. Recidivism rates and data reflecting current trends in delinquency should be presented in open forums. The State dedicates an enormous amount of resources on the moderate to low risk chronic offender population. Youth who are improperly placed, or placed in a facility with inadequate services, are at risk to recidivate. Thus, the need for resources continues to grow.

Changing the lives of delinquent youth will ultimately have an impact on public safety. The faith and business communities should be involved in providing job opportunities, counseling services, community service opportunities, and pro-social development. Particularly, during a youth's early reintegration there are a number of negative influences that can be detrimental to a youth's positive adjustment. A successful youth program must contain a strong community based referral and follow-up component to combat negative influences that may surface.

Promoting public safety and ensuring that all citizens of Maryland are protected from victimization is the fundamental goal of DJS. For this reason, it is vital to embark on a campaign to involve as many groups, organizations, or businesses, as early as possible, in the development of alternative living arrangements for youth in out-of-home placements. These groups should be solicited to support the State's endeavors and be given an active voice in the decision-making process from the onset. Engaging the community will support the State's efforts to create a network of services for youth being served.

Pilot Program

Implementation for the proposed pilot should begin with Echo Lake (South Mountain Complex) or Monocacy (NRMA). Echo Lake is the only proposed site that has some of the infrastructure to implement programming within a practical timeframe. The site has an existing 4,000 square foot building, a shower building, basketball court and picnic shelter. It also was previously used for team-building training, with some of the former ropes course elements still in existence. Echo Lake is in close proximity to the South Mountain State Battlefield (the location of a major Civil War battle) and the Appalachian National Scenic Trail (AT). Program participants could participate in outdoor activities and may become involved with helping to maintain the AT and State Battlefield.

As mentioned previously, this program should serve a capacity of forty-eight (48) youth. DJS general funds should be enhanced to cover costs for long term program development. Implementation for the pilot program should be targeted to begin in FY 2006.

Program Implementation Timeline

| | |
|-------------|--|
| 10/2004 | Task Force Report issued |
| 12/2004 | DJS Facilities Master Plan report |
| 01- 04/2005 | General Assembly meets |
| | Budget for FY 2006 |
| 01- 07/2005 | PR/Political/Community preparations for Echo Lake or Monocacy pilot |
| | Infrastructure preparation |
| | Staff selection processes |
| | Staff training process |
| 07/2005 | Begin implementation of program at Echo Lake or Monocacy |
| 06/2006 | Complete final assessment of program at Echo Lake or Monocacy |
| 06/2006 | Implement Harford program – using lessons learned from Echo Lake or Monocacy |
| 01/2007 | Implement Charles program – using lessons learned from Echo Lake or Monocacy and Harford |
| 07/2007 | Implement Somerset program – using lessons learned from Echo Lake or Monocacy, Harford and Charles |

Note: The timeline is only as good as the appropriations for the program.

Projected Program Budget

Pilot Program (48 Bed Capacity)
Adventure-based Facility at Echo Lake – South Mountain Complex or Monocacy (NRMA)

| Item | Annual Cost | Remarks |
|--|------------------|---|
| Salaries | 5,000,000 | 100 Pins – Based on Annual Budget for VCA Regional Facility |
| Contractual Services | 3,000 | Based on Annual Budget for VCA Regional Facility |
| Travel | 4,000 | Based on Annual Budget for VCA Regional Facility |
| Maintenance – 4,000 square foot building & shower building | 3,000 | Based on Annual Budget for VCA Regional Facility |
| Food/Kitchen Supplies | 5,000 | Based on Annual Budget for VCA Regional Facility |
| Food | 114,000 | Based on Annual Budget for VCA Regional Facility |
| Laundry Managerial Supplies | 3,500 | Based on Annual Budget for VCA Regional Facility |
| Medical Supplies/Services | 41,000 | Based on Annual Budget for VCA Regional Facility |
| Education Equipment/Supplies | 5,600 | Based on Annual Budget for VCA Regional Facility |
| Recreation Supplies | 5,000 | Based on Annual Budget for VCA Regional Facility |
| Youth Clothing/Uniforms | 18,000 | Based on Annual Budget for VCA Regional Facility |
| Computer Equipment/Supplies/Leases | 400,000 | Based on Annual Budget for VCA Regional Facility |
| Total | 5,602,100 | |

NOTE: The proposed annual cost is based on the budget presented for the new DJS Victor Cullen Regional Facility (48 bed). This program budget was used due to the similarities in program structure and design.

Appendices

A. Youth Profile (for criteria development)
University of Maryland Bureau of Governmental Research (BGR) A-1

B. GEO Maps of Available Site Locations (for prospective programming)
Department of Natural Resources (DNR) A-2

C. Task Force Committee and Meeting Dates A-3



Appendix A

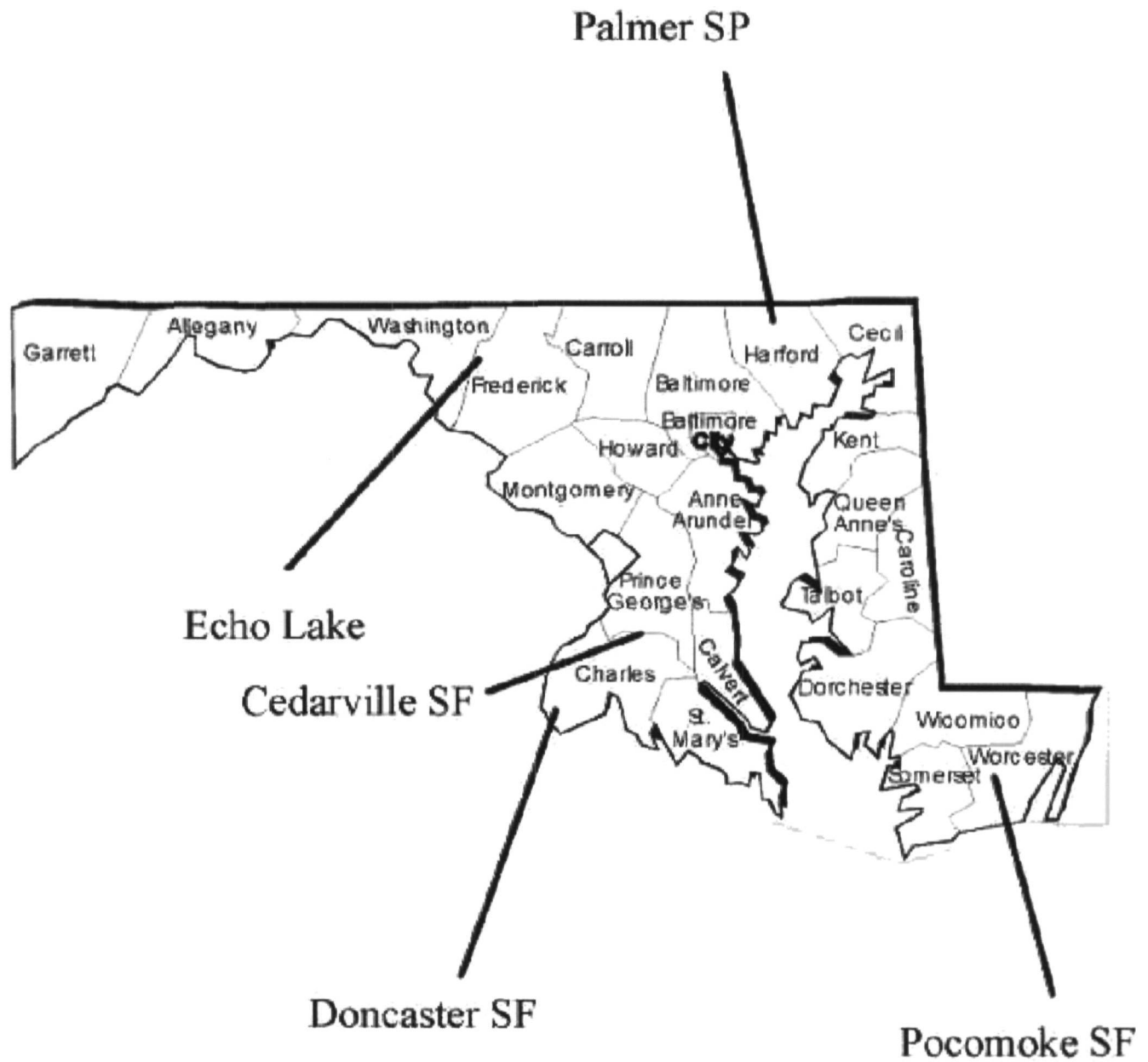
Youth Profile

Classification & Placement Assessment for Adjudicated Youth Pilot Test *9.20.04
 Youth with "Moderate" assessment score who qualify for "Special Programs" placement
 Assessments Completed January 2002 through September 2003

| N=36 | Frequency | Percent |
|--|-----------|---------|
| Gender | | |
| Male | 28 | 77.78% |
| Race/Ethnicity | | |
| African-American | 20 | 55.56% |
| White | 11 | 30.56% |
| Hispanic | 2 | 5.56% |
| Other | 3 | 8.33% |
| Educational Services Needed | | |
| Yes | 26 | 78.79% |
| Any School Problems within the Last 90 Days | | |
| Yes | 19 | 57.58% |
| Ever Failed or Repeated a Grade | | |
| Yes | 23 | 63.89% |
| Vocational Development Needed | | |
| Yes | 15 | 45.45% |
| Mental Health Services Needed | | |
| Yes | 20 | 60.61% |
| Substance Abuse Services Needed | | |
| Yes | 16 | 48.48% |
| Frequency of Drug Use within the Last 90 Days | | |
| No Use | 19 | 63.33% |
| Less Than One Time per Month | 4 | 13.33% |
| 1-3 Times per Month | 4 | 13.33% |
| 1-2 Times per Week | 2 | 6.67% |
| More Than 2x per Week | 1 | 3.33% |
| Social and Peer Relations Services Needed | | |
| Yes | 23 | 69.70% |
| Family Services Needed | | |
| Yes | 25 | 75.76% |
| Most Common Adjudicated Offenses | | |
| Assault – 1 st Degree | 8 | 22.22% |
| Burglary – 1 st Degree | 6 | 16.67% |
| Handgun Violation | 6 | 16.67% |
| Robbery | 4 | 11.11% |
| Youth had 4 or More Referrals to DJS in Past 3 Years | | |
| Yes | 17 | 48.57% |
| Any Prior Category 1 Offenses | | |
| Yes | 6 | 17.14% |
| Any Prior Category 2 Offenses | | |
| Yes | 11 | 30.56% |
| Any Assaultive Behavior within the Last 90 Days | | |
| Yes | 9 | 30.00% |

Appendix B

GEO Map of Available Site Locations



Appendix C

Task Force Committee and Meeting Dates

Task Force Chairperson

Kenneth C. Montague, Jr., DJS, Chairperson

Task Force Members

Barbara DiPietro, DHMH

Honorable Anthony O'Donnell, House of Delegates

Honorable Robert A. Zirkin, House of Delegates

Neal Welch, DNR

X Sergeant James T. Dewees, Carroll County CASA

Dr. Linda Bluth, MSDE E.O.

Honorable Judge Amy Bragunier, Charles County

X Michael Burgeson, Anne Arundel County SAO

Craig Adams, SSA Office of Management Services, DHR

David Addison, Baltimore County OPD

Timothy Snyder, OCYF

Janet Hankin, Baltimore City SAO

Lisa D. Myers, Howard County Police Department

Daniel A.M. Slade, Law Office of Slade & Slade, LLC.

Task Force Staff

Walter V. Jackson and Lauren Gordon, DJS

Meeting Dates

December 30, 2003

February 28, 2004

April 28, 2004

July 7, 2004

September 8, 2004

